

MS-LOT European Protected Species Case Handling Report

Licence Number: 00011287

Licensing Officer: [Redacted]

Site	Inner Hebrides
Company	Fugro GB Ltd Survey HouseDenmore Road Aberdeen United Kingdom AB23 8JW
Applicant	[Redacted]
Brief Description of Project	Talisk Offshore Wind Farm - Geophysical Surveys
Associated Licences	Basking Shark Licence No. 00011288

Species	harbour porpoise (<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>);bottlenose dolphin (<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>);minke whale (<i>Balaenoptera acutorostrata</i>);Risso's dolphin (<i>Grampus griseus</i>);white sided dolphin (<i>Lagenorhynchus acutus</i>);short beaked common dolphin (<i>Delphinus delphis</i>);white-beaked dolphin (<i>Lagenorhynchus albirostris</i>);long-finned pilot whale (<i>Globicephala melas</i>);Cuvier's beaked whale (<i>Ziphius cavirostris</i>);Striped dolphin (<i>Stenella coeruleoalba</i>)
Inshore/Offshore	Inshore

MS-LOT European Protected Species Case Handling Report

TEST 1	Purpose of licence
	Imperative reasons of overriding public interest (including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment)
Comments	
<p>The proposed survey activities are considered to meet the requirements of Regulation 44(2) (e) by providing an environmental benefit on both a national and international scale through compliance with policy and legislative goals regarding the development of renewable energy projects and targets to mitigate the impacts of climate change.</p> <p>The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 sets a binding target of net-zero emissions of all greenhouse gasses by 2045 and the development of renewable energy projects, such as the planned Talisk offshore wind farm is a key factor in reaching this target.</p> <p>If the proposed survey operations did not proceed, the Project cannot progress through the consenting and development phases, thereby delaying or preventing the delivery of crucial renewable energy infrastructure.</p> <p>The proposed offshore survey activities are considered to meet the requirements of Regulation 55(6)(a) by providing environmental benefit on both a national and international scale through compliance with policy and legislative goals regarding the development of renewable energy projects and targets to mitigate the impacts of climate change.</p> <p>The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 sets a binding target of net-zero emissions of all greenhouse gasses by 2045 and the development of renewable energy projects, such as the planned Talisk offshore wind farm. is a key factor in reaching this target.</p> <p>If the proposed survey operations did not proceed, the Project cannot progress through the consenting and development phases, thereby delaying or preventing the delivery of crucial renewable energy infrastructure.</p>	
Test 1 satisfied?	YES

MS-LOT European Protected Species Case Handling Report

TEST 2	Satisfactory alternatives
Comments	
<p>An alternative to collecting sub-bottom profiling data could be to rely on borehole sampling and cone penetration testing. However, this data would never be continuous and would leave significant gaps between sampling locations. To employ these methods at an sufficient scale to approach the confidence levels required would have significant environmental impacts due to their interaction with the seabed. Use of the sub-bottom profiler allows the surveys to be more efficient in data collection while being less intrusive than the alternative.</p> <p>An alternative to collection of side scan sonar could be grab sampling. Again, this is an intrusive sampling method, for which the effort needed to provide sufficient coverage would have significant impacts of its own. Side scan allows a large a swath of continuous data to be collected efficiently and minimise the requirement for interaction with the seabed.</p> <p>In conclusion there is no suitable alternative method of collecting 100% coverage geodata over the proposed cable routes without using geophysical noise emitting equipment.</p> <p>Without this information it is considered extremely unlikely that wind turbines could be safely installed or appropriate cable routes selected. An offshore wind farm for which there is no reliable information for seabed conditions, no recent information on obstructions or hazards, and no habitat mapping would not be given consent because the environmental impacts could not be assessed. From an operational perspective, installing wind turbines and laying cables where seabed and geological conditions are unknown poses a huge risk to safety as equipment can easily be damaged when used in the wrong environment. The project would not be viable without collecting this geophysical data.</p>	
Test 2 satisfied?	YES

TEST 3	Favourable conservation status
Comments	
<p>NatureScot consultation response received 2 July 2025 confirmed the proposed works will not adversely affect the integrity of the site providing the mitigation measures are adhered to. The appraisal carried out considered that the survey activities to be short in duration, temporary, and spatially limited.</p>	
Test 3 satisfied?	YES

Date application received: 09/06/2025

Consultation start date: 19/06/2025

Consultation end date: 03/07/2025

Notes

Date	Text	Created By
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Awaiting Information

Start date	End date	Duration (days)	Waiting for	Waiting on Information From
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Licence issue date: 10/07/2025

Date report due: 31/12/2025

MS-LOT European Protected Species Case Handling Report

Licence start date: 11/07/2025

Licence end date: 30/11/2025

National Marine Plan considerations:

The decision is:
Comments:

Reviewed and signed by:

Signed:[Redacted]

Date: 03/07/2025